In The Claims:

The claims are amended as follows:

1-28. Cancelled

29. (Currently Amended) A method of inhibiting degradation of a natriuretic peptide present in a subject, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction; ~~and~~

performing an assay to detect a natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific dipeptidyl peptidase ("DPP") to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of the natriuretic peptide by prolyl-specific DPP.

30. (Original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise a dipeptide analogue comprising an aza, azetadine, boronate, hydroxylamine, or phosphonate moiety.

31. (Original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise an antibody or fragment thereof.

32. (Currently amended) A method for increasing the level of natriuretic peptide function in a subject, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction; ~~and~~

performing an assay to detect a natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific DPP to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of the natriuretic peptide in said subject by prolyl-specific DPP.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 32, wherein one or more additional molecules selected from the group consisting of inhibitors of neutral endopeptidase and natriuretic peptides are also administered to said subject.

34-42. Cancelled

43. (Currently amended) A method of treatment, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction; ~~and~~

performing an assay to detect a B-type natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific DPP to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of B-type natriuretic peptide in said subject by prolyl-specific DPP.

44. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise a dipeptide analogue comprising an aza, azetadine, boronate, hydroxylamine, or phosphonate moiety.

45. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise an antibody or fragment thereof.

46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein one or more additional molecules selected from the group consisting of inhibitors of neutral endopeptidase and natriuretic peptides are also administered to said subject.

47. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein said performing step comprises:

forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and

detecting said complex.

48. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein said performing step comprises:

forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and

detecting said complex.

49. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein said performing step comprises:

forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and

detecting said complex.